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It has helped cut violent crimes in Chicago, but now an anti-gun program is losing its funding from the federal government.

Congress has dropped funding for state and local agencies involved in the "project safe neighborhoods" program.

Chicago police officials say the anti-gun program played a big role in the 25-percent drop in the city's homicide rate last year.

The program is about changing behavior, changing attitudes, to ultimately address the cause of crime.

It's part of project safe neighborhoods. The federal money that deals with deterring crime has been cut by congress prompting local officials to look for alternatives.

Getting guns off the streets of Chicago isn't the only way to reduce violence and crime. The more difficult task is keeping offenders away from the guns for good.

The federal government gives the city more than one million dollars to address that, but now funding for that program is in jeopardy.

"The goal is to change behavior, to deter felons from picking up a gun where otherwise they might be inclined to pick up a gun," said Assistant U.S. Attorney David Hoffmen.

Hoffmen helps coordinate the project safe neighborhoods program, in particular the parolee forum.

In the last two years, 600 to 900 recently released felons have gone through the forum which not only lays out the consequences for picking another gun, but also advises the felons of job opportunities and job training.

The forums have been operating in four districts and in those districts the numbers of homicides are down from 172 last year to 111 this year according to Chicago police statistics.

"Based on performance and based on the impact that project safe neighborhoods has done, we have experienced a 35-percent reduction -- let me repeat that-- a 35-percent reduction in homicides in those four districts," said 1st Deputy Police Supt. Dana Starks.

With funding for the parolee forum up in the air, local politicians are working to come up with firm up support in Washington.

"We need to go to the Illinois congressman Speaker Hastert to make sure this Chicago program is funded," said Rep. Mark Kirk.

"We will go to Washington and find out. It's a possibility. I haven't heard from anyone yet, but like anyone else, we will talk to the congressional delegation and do everything possible to show it's been very, very effective," Mayor Daley said.

Project safe neighborhoods is conducted with four federal and local agencies. There is money for the parolee forum through the end of next year, but what happens after the money runs out is unclear.